

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

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P R 111341Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1552
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7474

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R T E X T

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, TECH, IN
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR TOPICS

1. IN A HALF-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH THE PM'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, V. SHANKAR, TODAY ON MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS, I ASKED FOR HIS PERSONAL OPINION ON WHAT ROOM FOR MANUEVER MAY REMAIN IN THE NUCLEAR AREA. HE MADE A NUMBER OF POINTS WORTH NOTING.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER IS A REALIST. HE KNOWS THAT HIS CONDITIONS FOR INDIA'S ACCEPTANCE OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS ARE DIFFICULT, BUT HE NEEDS SOME SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT BY THE US AND THE USSR BEFORE HE CAN SERIOUSLY CONSIDER MEETING OUR REQUIREMENT. SHANKAR'S PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT A GENUINE CTB AND SALT II WILL HAVE TO ENTAIL PROVISIONS FOR EFFECTIVE INSPECTION TO GUARD AGAINST CLANDESTINE EVASIONS AND THIS WILL MEAN THAT THE WEAPONS STATES ACCEPT THE "PRINCIPLE OF INSPECTION" AS APPLYING TO THEMSELVES. SHANKAR SPECULATED THAT "YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INSPECTION MIGHT ENABLE US (I.E., SHANKAR AND UNSPECIFIED OTHERS) TO

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PERSUADE THE PM" THAT A SUFFICIENT CONCESSION HAS BEEN MADE TO MEET HIS REQUIREMENT OF RECIPROCAL INSPECTION RIGHTS. (COMMENT: I PRESUME THAT THE SORTS OF SURVEILLANCE SUFFICIENT TO MONITOR A CTB AND THE PROSPECTIVE SALT II AGREEMENT DO NOT ENTAIL ACTUAL PLANT INSPECTIONS, AS SHANKAR SEEMS TO THINK THEY WOULD, BUT LACKING REAL INFORMATION, I SIMPLY NOTED HIS SPECULATION AND DID NOT QUESTION IT.)

3. WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE HOW STRONGLY THE PM BELIEVES
IN CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS. IT IS FOR HIM A MATTER OF
BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT THEY MUST BE ADHERED TO. HE HAS
JUST RECENTLY ON THE GROUNDS OF THIS PRINCIPLE REFUSED
TO BACK UP THE FINANCE MINISTER IN ADVOCATING DEBT
RESCHEDULING. (COMMENT: SHANKAR WAS CLEARLY TRYING TO
TELL ME THAT IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PM WE SHOULD BE
VERY CAREFUL HOW WE APPROACH THE PROPOSITION THAT A NEW
LAW UNILATERALLY ARRIVED AT CAN OVERRIDE A SIGNED AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.)

4. SHANKAR ALSO SAID THAT HE HOPED WE UNDERSTOOD THAT
TARPUR IS "A MATTER OF PRESTIGE" IN THE EYES OF INDIANS.
(COMMENT: NOTHING NEW IN THAT OF COURSE.)
GOHEEN

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